

A
SERMON,

DELIVERED AT BARNSTABLE,

JULY 14, 1802,

AT THE

Installation

OF THE

REV. JOHN PEAK,

TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH
AND CONGREGATION IN THAT TOWN.

BY THOMAS BALDWIN, A.M.

PASTOR OF THE SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH IN BOSTON.

Nos autem prædicamus Christum crucifixum. PAUL.

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A SERMON.

TITUS, ii. 7, 8.

"IN ALL THINGS SHEWING THYSELF A PATTERN OF GOOD WORKS; IN DOCTRINE SHEWING UNCORRUPTNESS, GRAVITY, SINCERITY, SOUND SPEECH THAT CANNOT BE CONDEMNED; THAT HE THAT IS OF THE CONTRARY PART MAY BE ASHAMED, HAVING NO Evil THING TO SAY OF YOU."

MEN in public life are placed upon an eminence, which exposes their conduct to inspection on every side. In some cases, they are hardly allowed the apology which human imperfection pleads in their behalf. But with this deduction, we certainly have a right to expect a conduct and behaviour corresponding with the office they sustain.

Particular qualifications are requisite to particular offices. A man, who may be eminently qualified for one, may be wholly incompetent to the duties of another. Providence assigns every man his particular station, and furnishes him with abilities to discharge the duties of it.

Almost all nations, of all religions, have separated and set apart a particular order of men to be teachers of their sacred mysteries. The Jews, by God's special appointment, had their different orders of priests. The Pagan nations, directed either by the light of

nature or their own fancies, had theirs also. Different religions, and even the same under different dispensations, require different qualifications in those who are set apart for public instructors.

Purity of life and manners have always been required in the ministers of true religion. The gospel, far from lowering the qualifications of its public teachers, has added new requisites. Under the Mo-
saic dispensation, a son of Levi might be admitted as legally qualified for the service of the temple, if his body were free from blemishes, and his life from gross immoralities, let the temper of his heart be as it might. Under the gospel it is far otherwise. Here it is of primary importance that a public teacher should be a real experimental Christian. That he should be called out from the world by grace, and *Christ revealed in him*, in order to qualify him to preach the gospel.* No other qualification can supply the place, or supersede the necessity, of this. If a man could speak with the tongues of men and angels, and had the gift of prophecy, so as to understand the divine mysteries, and could comprehend the vast depths of human knowledge, and yet were destitute of this heavenly charity, this supreme love to God, and love to man, he would lack an essential qualification for the work.† He might, indeed, become a popular preacher, and be admired by those who themselves are strangers to the power of religion; but his preaching being only with enticing words of man's wisdom, and not in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power, he would appear to the serious experimental Christian, only as a "founding brass, and a tinkling symbal."

It will not be understood that we suppose grace alone qualifies a man to preach the gospel; or that we suppose every gracious or good man is called to

* Gal. i. 15—17.

† 1 Cor. xiii.

this work; by no means. For, although we think it an indispensable qualification, it is not the only one.

We conceive that those, who are intended by Heaven for this important work, are particularly furnished with natural gifts; these are sanctified by divine grace; improved in a greater or less degree by education; and that they are specially called to the work by the HOLY GHOST. St. Paul's address in this epistle accords with this sentiment. His words are, "*To Titus mine own son after the common faith.*" Titus was probably one of the seals of the Apostle's ministry; hence he felt a most lively interest in his prosperity, and ever treated him with all the affectionate tenderness of a spiritual father. He uses similar expressions in his epistles to Timothy and Philemon. The appellation of son frequently occurs, when addressing his younger brethren in the ministry; especially such as he had been instrumental in converting to Christianity. The relation here claimed was wholly founded in grace; in a participation and communion in the same divine blessings.

In our text the Apostle endeavours to impress the mind of Titus with two important ideas, i. e. How he ought to live, and How he ought to preach, if he would approve himself unto God, and be useful to his fellow-men. In the ensuing discourse we shall attempt to illustrate these two particulars. We proceed,

FIRST, To show how a minister ought to live; "*In all things, faith the Apostle, shewing thyself a pattern of good works.*" It is expected that ministers will instruct by their example as well as by their doctrine. This is perhaps the most difficult part.*

* "An heterodox conversation, faith one, will carry an orthodox preacher to hell." *Burkitt in loc.*

A man in any station in life, whose profession and conduct disagree, must appear miserably inconsistent; but in none can it appear more so, than in a minister of the gospel. It is a melancholy remark which has often, and too justly, been made upon a preacher of this description; "When he is in the pulpit, it is a pity he should ever come out; and when he is out, it is a pity he should ever go in again." To guard Titus against this inconsistency of conduct the Apostle charged him *in all things to shew himself a pattern of good works*, worthy the imitation of his flock.

A few remarks may be necessary in order to distinguish between a mere self-righteous exactness, and those works which CHRIST will own as good at the last day.

A *good work*, considered in a scriptural or evangelical light, must be performed from a right principle, done in a proper or becoming manner, and directed to a right end. The principle must be a regard to what is right, or in other words, a desire to do our duty. The manner of doing a good work will be always limited and directed by the rule, or law which requires it. The end of every good action is described in the following words of the Apostle: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." This is indeed to act right. It is to act like God himself.

But do such as were never renewed by divine grace ever act in this manner? As reasonably might you expect to gather "figs of thistles, or olive berries of thorns," as to find good fruit on a bad tree. The tree must be made good in order to its bringing forth good fruit. So it is conceived, that our works will be denominated by our final Judge, not according to the effect produced, but by the temper of heart which influenced us to them. "The Athenians once complained to the oracle of Ammon that

the gods had declared in favour of the Lacedemonians, who offered only a small number of victims, and those meagre and mutilated. To which the oracle, it is said, replied; that not all the sacrifices of the Greeks were equal in worth to the humble modest prayer, in which the Lacedemonians were contented with imploring only real blessings of the gods."

A dinner of herbs given in love, in the true spirit of the gospel, is more acceptable than a stalled ox with hatred. Hence you see that it is the temper of the heart which determines the moral quality of our actions. Every Christian is by the grace of God possessed of a temper in some degree corresponding with his duty. This temper is the effect of the regenerating influences of the Spirit of God. "For ye are his workmanship, (saith the Apostle) created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." It is the new man in CHRIST therefore whose works are good. This seems to have been one great end which CHRIST had in view in dying for his people; "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

But it may be asked, what are the works themselves which may be denominated good, if done from a right temper? I answer, every act of obedience will come under this denomination. CHRIST called his preaching and miracles good works. "Many good works (said he) have I shewed you of my Father; for which of these works do you stone me?"

A certain woman, who had experienced the pardoning love of CHRIST, urged on by the grateful sentiments of her own heart, came with a box of precious ointment, and stood behind him while he sat at meat and poured it on his head. Some of the selfish disciples, not knowing the meaning of what

she had done, began very freely to censure her conduct ; “ To what purpose (said they) is this waste ? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.” Wretched parsimony indeed ! To think what is bestowed upon the blessed JESUS wasted ! What, dare censure and grieve this humble penitent too ! “ When JESUS understood it, he said unto them, why trouble ye the woman ? for she hath wrought a *good work* upon me.” So pleasing was this token of grateful respect to CHRIST, that he gave commandment that wheresoever this gospel should be preached in the whole world, this should be told as a memorial of the woman.

Should it be inquired more particularly, what are the good works which a minister is to be a pattern of to his people ; the text answers, “ All.” But we may notice particularly, 1st. He must be a pattern to them of every social and domestic virtue. They will naturally look to him for an example, and they expect to see him exhibit, in the various offices of social life, a pattern worthy of their imitation. He must be courteous and condescending, but not servile ; prudent, but not too reserved.

A mistaken idea of ministerial dignity and importance has led some to put on forbidding airs, by which means many of their people have approached them with as much terror as they would a ghost. Others, by too familiarly becoming all things to all men, have let themselves down so low, as entirely to lose their influence and respect.

In order to be a *pattern* for others to imitate, a minister need to be exceedingly circumspect in all the walks of social life. Much of his usefulness undoubtedly depends on this circumstance. There are some, who preach sound doctrine, but in their social intercourse with their friends, they are haughty, peevish, and unsocial ; or, on the other hand, they are too trifling and vain. The minister, who would

wish to be extensively useful, *will seek to please all men*, not for the sake of gaining their applause, but *for their good unto edification*.

2d. He must be a *pattern* of kindness and benevolence. His heart should be the seat of all the tender affections which warm and expand the human breast. His duty will often call him to the habitations of sorrow and distress; and although the great object of his visit is to hold up the consolations of the gospel, and point the anxious mind to the remedy which God has provided for the penitent sinner; yet his tender sympathies will seem to do good like a medicine. His affectionate tenderness to the children of affliction will leave an impression upon their minds; that will not be easily erased.

To stand aloof at such a season, or even to discover an unfeeling indifference towards those whose comfort and eternal welfare he is bound to seek, would be utterly inconsistent with the office he sustains.

But sympathies, counsels and prayers are not all that a minister is called upon to bestow. He will often find objects of distress which will need pecuniary assistance also. Conceive for a moment that he is conducted to a thatched cottage, or perhaps to a forlorn garret. On entering the apartment he beholds a fellow being stretched on a wretched couch, struggling with the last convulsions of dissolving nature, and expecting in a few moments to launch into the wide ocean of eternity. He looks up upon the dear servant of CHRIST with all the solicitude of a dying man, and thus addresses him: "O Sir, I believe I have but a little longer to live, and I fear I am not prepared to die. I have been a great sinner. Do you think there can be mercy for such a one? What shall I do? I would give a world for an assurance of an interest in CHRIST. Do pray for me, that God may have mercy upon my poor soul, and pardon my

fits and fit me for my great and last change." Prayers are offered up for him. He falters apace. He attempts again to speak, and thank his friend, and to let him know that he now feels willing to give himself up, soul and body, into the hands of CHRIST; and that he hopes, through the mercy of God, he shall be finally saved. His strength is exhausted, and he seems now as if he were going without another struggle or sigh. But the sobbings of surrounding grief again arouse him from the stupor of death, and call for a moment his attention from things eternal. He once more opens his eyes, and beholds the dear partner of his earthly joys and cares, holding her little babes by the hand, standing by him.—Affectionate tenderness flows in her falling tears, and the deep pangs of grief, which no language can describe, heave her afflicted bosom. The affecting scene arrests the last unbroken fibre which remains about his heart;—and in faltering accents he is heard to say, "Adieu, my constant loving mate—farewel my sweet babes—I must go and leave you.—God of mercy, to thy infinite compassion I commend them: for thou hast said, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me."——Could a feeling benevolent minister leave such a scene of distress without attempting a small alleviation? No surely; if he had but two mites in his pocket, he would freely bestow them.

But it is not enough that this kind affection should appear in a single solitary instance. He must be "given to hospitality." It must become a fixed habit. While he inculcates the duties of charity and benevolence upon his people, he must show himself a pattern of the same good works.

I add, 3dly. He must be a pattern of *uprightness* and *integrity*. His engagements of every kind will be made with great caution; and he will endeavour to

discharge them with conscientious exactness. Should he once appear to be regardless of them, and to trifle with his own appointments, his people would soon lose all confidence in him. His conduct must be free from the appearance of equivocation and deceit, not only in things of a spiritual nature, but also in those of a temporal. Should he prevaricate in things of a temporal nature, his hearers might suppose he would do the same in the great concerns of religion. Such a line of conduct would not only destroy his own usefulness, but tend to weaken the influence of Christian morality, and expose its important doctrines to contempt.

I remark once more,

4thly. He must in an especial manner be a pattern of *piety* and habitual *godliness*. This will be reasonably expected from him. Both saints and sinners expect that their minister will be a man of exemplary piety. The idea of an irreligious ungodly minister is shockingly absurd. Few persons are so lost to all sense of virtue and propriety, as not to respect and venerate that minister, who approves himself to their consciences in the sight of God, that he is sincere in his profession and conduct.

His house will be a house of prayer. Nothing will be indulged there by his knowledge and consent, inconsistent with the pious resolution of Joshua; "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

In his family and parochial visits, he will endeavour to promote the spiritual interests of his flock. At all proper seasons he will introduce religious conversation; not merely for the sake of talking about it, but from a real desire for the salvation of their precious souls.

But it will be difficult to discharge these duties aright, and in a manner which will encourage success, unless the prevailing temper of the heart corresponds with them. How important then, that the Chris-

tian minister should have his heart at all times under the influence of divine love. Without this habitual temper, he will exhibit a very imperfect pattern for his people to imitate. This piety will also display itself with peculiar force in his public preaching. But I shall have occasion to speak more of this hereafter; therefore I proceed to shew,

SECONDLY, How the good minister is directed to preach; "*In doctrine shewing uncorruptness.*" The sentiments which we exhibit to our people must be the pure unadulterated truths of God's word; free from all mixture of human invention. The apostle Peter has very elegantly compared young converts to new born babes; and recommended the *sincere milk of the word* as alone suited to their nourishment and growth in grace.

In order to assist your meditations on this part of the subject, it may be proper to notice a few particulars.

1st. If our doctrine be uncorrupt and pure, we shall endeavour to bring into view and exhibit the character of God, as we find it exhibited in the Bible. We shall not mutilate it, with a view of rendering it less exceptionable to his enemies. The infinite holiness and justice of God, manifested in his law, will be brought into view, as well as his goodness and mercy proclaimed in the gospel.

The faithful minister will not for fear of offending the bold transgressor conceal the awful threatnings, which a just God has denounced against the impenitent unbeliever. No, he will preach the uncorrupted word, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear to hear. It concerns him to declare the truth faithfully, and leave the event with God. The spotless purity of the divine character, manifested in a universal hatred of sin and love of holiness, will be much insisted on. The faithful minister will endeavour to shew his hearers, that the true happiness

of all intelligent beings essentially consists in likeness to God. He will assure them, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Were it possible for the impenitent sinner to behold the splendours of the divine glory, as they are displayed to the view of all holy beings, he would seek to shun the sight, and hide himself in the dark recesses of endless night.

The *goodness* and *mercy* of God will also be exhibited as a ground of encouragement and support to the humble and penitent. That God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in JESUS is a precious truth. But it would be corrupt doctrine to infer, either from the goodness or clemency of the divine nature; or from the rich displays of grace and mercy made known in the gospel, that God will not punish the finally impenitent according to the threatnings denounced against them in his holy word.

All reasoning against explicit declarations of truth is vain. Had the general deluge been foretold with as much certainty as the day of judgment and the future punishment of the wicked are, human reason might have stated many unanswerable objections to it. Arguments apparently founded upon the very laws of nature might have been adduced to shew the impossibility of such an event. But how impotent and unavailing are all such reasonings against the fixed purposes of the great JEHOVAH, who, after all, will "do all his pleasure." "He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth;" or leaveth in their hardness. In a word; if our doctrine be uncorrupt, we shall exhibit all the perfections and attributes of Deity, as they are exhibited by the inspired writers.

2dly. The character of man as a fallen, but rational accountable being will be brought into view. No attempt will be made to give it a false colouring.

The scriptures represent man as in a state of total moral depravity. The whole head sick, and the whole heart faint. The noble powers of the soul are all debased. Instead of that supreme love to God, which at first ennobled and elevated man to a rank but little lower than the angels, a degrading self-love occupies his affections. Yea, so total and universal is this depravity, that the apostle has in the most unqualified sense declared, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." CHRIST speaking of the Jews said, "but now have they both seen and hated, both me and my Father." "What then, are we better than they? in no wise: For (saith the Apostle) we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin." He goes on to give a just, but awful picture of depravity.* The daily conduct of mankind in rebelling against the command of God, and in rejecting the gospel, evinces the truth of these observations. If we believe that *the carnal mind is enmity against God*; that *sinners hate both God and CHRIST*; that *they love darkness rather than light*; we need no further evidence on the subject.

We are now prepared in the 3d. place, to remark upon the mediation of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. Foreseeing the apostacy of man, God was pleased to appoint a fit person to undertake the work of redemption; one that should be able to save even to the uttermost. If our doctrine be uncorrupt, we shall hold up JESUS CHRIST in the same character that the scriptures do. They lead us to conceive of him as a divine person. They inform us, that "in the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God." Yea, that "all the fulness of the godhead dwells in him bodily."

* See Rom. iii. 9—18.

As a divine person he was intitled to and received divine honours. It is written "thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." "But when he bringeth his first begotten into the world he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him." He, that thought it not robbery to be equal with God, claimed equal honours. He declared that it was the will of him that sent him, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they do the Father." It is evident that the Jews understood JESUS CHRIST to claim prerogatives and honours which did not belong to man; for, when he asked them for which of the good works which he had shewed them from his Father it was that they stoned him; they answered him, "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou being a man makest thyself God." If CHRIST were no more than a mere man, the Jews were undoubtedly right, and by their law he ought to die. But shall we say of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, when he claims divine honours, that he blasphemeth? * GOD forbid!

In the hands of this divine person was entrusted the great work of redemption. No other person was adequate to the arduous undertaking. It was foretold of him, that "he should not fail, nor be discouraged, until he had set judgment in the earth, and the isles should wait for his law."† By his perfect obedience he established and vindicated the rights of the divine law; and by his spotless sacrifice on the cross, he made an atonement for sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. On this broad foundation the doctrine of reconciliation rests. The proclamation of the gospel proceeds upon the same footing. But such is the fatal nature of depravity,

* John, x. 36.

† Isa. xlii. 4.

that we should still perish, if left wholly to ourselves ; which leads me to remark,

4thly, Upon the influences of the Divine Spirit, in convincing, regenerating, and sanctifying the soul.

It is the SPIRIT of GOD, who applies truth to the heart, and convinces the sinner of his lost and miserable condition. It is under the same divine influence that the soul is formed anew, and the exercises of faith and repentance produced in it, and the whole moral temper entirely changed. Under the same heavenly influence the soul progresses in sanctification, until it is finally meetened and prepared for the heavenly glory.

I add once more, 5thly. Uncorrupt doctrine, according to the scriptures, asserts the eternal rewards of the saints, and the everlasting punishment of the wicked. That men will be judged according to their works, and that their final state will be determined according to their moral characters, is no less a dictate of reason than a sentiment of divine revelation. Then virtue shall meet its full reward, and vice, in all its hidden forms, shall be detected and punished. The righteous shall then be received to a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment. The afflictions and sorrows of the saints shall come to an end, and their everlasting rest commence, "when the Lord JESUS shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord JESUS CHRIST : who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of his power." These unpalatable truths will be retained as parts of the pure uncorrupted doctrine of the gospel.

Had we time, we might enlarge on other particulars ; but it is thought the preceding are the most

essential ; and if these are held uncorrupt, the others will follow of course.

Under the first head of this discourse we have considered the general deportment and conduct of a good minister, in the various walks of social and domestic life. We have also attempted to shew *what* he is to preach ; it now remains to shew *how* he is to preach ; or the manner in which the uncorrupt doctrine is to be delivered from the pulpit.

As well becoming the sacred desk, and the subjects to be discussed, the Apostle in the text first mentions "*gravity*."

The minister, who realizes the solemn work he is engaged in, can hardly be otherwise than grave, if he considers himself as a messenger, sent by the eternal God to publish salvation to dying men, and to treat upon the awful realities of eternity ; that he is set to watch for souls, as one that must give account at the great day.

This gravity does not consist in a dull monotonous delivery ; but in a serious, fervid, solemn address, which carries evidence to the audience that the speaker believes and feels his subject himself. A certain divine, it is said, once asked a comedian, why the stage commanded the attention of an audience so much more than the pulpit. "Sir, (replied the comedian) we deliver *fiction* as though it were truth ; but you deliver *truth* as if it were only fiction."

The *gravity* recommended in our text is directly opposed to that display of humour and lightness, of wit and raillery, which are sometimes played off from the pulpit, as if it were a mere Harléquin stage. It is also opposed to a flowery, bombastic, unintelligible style, which at most can only dazzle and amuse, but can never instruct and edify an audience.

The Apostle next adds, "*sincerity*." And of all the inconsistent characters in the world, an insincere preacher is the most despicable. These may be considered of two kinds: Such as preach what they do not fully believe; and such as preach what they absolutely disbelieve. The first of these, though the least criminal of the two, cannot be supposed to possess true gospel sincerity. A man ought to know experimentally the truths he preaches to others. He ought to believe them in his heart. If he has not felt their power upon his own soul he is poorly qualified to recommend their excellency to others. Such teachers too much resemble the sons of Sceva, who adjured an evil spirit by JESUS, whom they said Paul preached; but whom they knew nothing about. But the latter, who preach what they positively disbelieve, or conceal what they verily believe to be truth, no apology can rescue from the severest censure.

But can there be such? yes, the Apostle mentions some in his time, "who preached CHRIST not sincerely, but of contention. Others, "who subverted whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." Shocking hypocrisy! What execrations must the wretch deserve, who would dare thus to insult Heaven, and deceive his fellow men.

But every true minister of CHRIST can say with the Apostle, "We are not as many which corrupt the word of GOD, but as of sincerity—in the sight of GOD speak we in CHRIST." We "have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of GOD deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of GOD." This is the sincerity recommended in the text.

The Apostle adds one direction more, i. e. "*Sound speech*, that cannot be condemned."

It is not only important that we preach uncorrupt doctrine, but that we communicate our ideas in plain unequivocal terms, easy to be understood by every capacity. "Not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." The Bible language is undoubtedly the best; and, in general, we ought to endeavour to convey the important sentiments we preach in the words made use of by the inspired Writers. This language, being familiar, is more easily comprehended. The Apostle assures us, that "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing." He is ignorant at least of the best method of preaching the gospel, so as to instruct and edify his hearers.

The man, who lives and preaches according to the description now given, can have no evil things justly said of him. Should any, who are on the contrary part, presume to do it, they would have occasion to be ashamed of their conduct.

If in the preceding remarks we have explained the true spirit of the text, they will naturally lead each of us, who profess to be public teachers, to self-examination; and our own consciences, and those of our hearers also will witness, how far our lives and preaching correspond with the injunctions of the Apostle.

Our Brother, the Pastor elect, will permit a few words of address.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

WE are this day assembled for the particular purpose of committing to your pastoral care, as an under shepherd, this flock of our Lord JESUS CHRIST; and to charge you with the oversight of it.

"Simon, son of Jonas," said CHRIST to Peter, "lovest thou me? Yea LORD," said he, "thou knowest that I love thee." Then "feed my sheep." Were we not persuaded of your love to the blessed JESUS, we should not dare to invite you to feed these sheep and these lambs, for they are CHRIST'S. Purchased with his precious blood, they are dear to him. Although they were once afar off from GOD in their sins, we trust they are now brought nigh; having "been washed, and justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord JESUS, and by the Spirit of our GOD."

These cannot live on husks, nor fill themselves with the east wind. Nothing can satisfy their souls, but the uncorrupted doctrines of the Cross. You will determine therefore not to know any thing, nor to preach any thing as the foundation of the sinner's hope, but "JESUS CHRIST and him crucified."

Let it be always deeply impressed upon your mind, that it is the gospel of the blessed GOD which you preach. If you are faithful, although your success should not be so great as you could wish, yet you will stand approved by your final Judge. But, my Brother, if you live and preach according to the spirit of our text, you may humbly hope for success. You have much to encourage you. It is said of our divine Master, that "for the joy that was set before him he endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of GOD." What joy is set before you, in the prospect of being happily instrumental of the salvation of your dear

people; and of having them for your crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord JESUS. Do I hear you saying, "I can of mine ownself do nothing? The work is difficult and arduous, and "who is sufficient for these things?" Without a divine influence my exertions will all be in vain?" For your encouragement permit me to remind you of that consoling promise made by the blessed JESUS to his disciples, "*Lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.*" Precious words! Methinks you are now ready to say, "I can do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth me." Go then in the strength of CHRIST, and proclaim his precious gospel; and may the blessing of almighty God give success to the word preached.

If in a moment of despondency you should think of relinquishing the work, you will call to mind the solemn vows you made to God when you were first brought to hope in his mercy. I have not forgotten the days of your espousals (though far away from this) when like Israel you followed the LORD in the wilderness. When under the influence of a heart warmed with the love of CHRIST, you were led to seek the salvation of your dear fellow men. Constrained by the same love, may you go on preaching the uncorrupted doctrines of the Cross, until you shall "finish your course with joy, and the ministry which you have received of the Lord JESUS." And will the God of all grace hold you in his hand, and make you faithful unto death; and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of life, which fadeth not away. God grant it for CHRIST's sake.

I now turn my address to this Church and Congregation.

BELOVED BRETHREN AND FRIENDS,

HOW mysterious and wonderful are the dispensations of Divine Providence! Twelve months last April, you were called to part with your late beloved Pastor. This afflictive dispensation we felt very sensibly; for his praise was in all our churches, which had the happiness of an acquaintance with him. We observed with much pleasure his reputation and usefulness increasing. The disadvantages, which he at first laboured under from the want of a public education, he was enabled in a good degree to overcome by persevering diligence and application to study. The amiableness of his disposition, and the gentleness of his manners, endeared him to all his friends; while his exemplary piety, and uniform Christian conduct, spread a lustre over his whole character. He finished his labours, when in the meridian of life, and was called as we trust to the bosom of his God, to receive the rewards of a faithful servant. How solemn the event! How very affecting and painful the stroke, which removed our brother from his family and flock. God of infinite compassion, to thy tenderest care we commend the dear bereaved widow; beseeching thee to be her God and Judge, and a Father to her fatherless children. In thee let them find mercy.

In this gloomy afflicted situation you were ready to ask, "by whom shall Jacob arise?" You had no one to take you by the hand, and lead you to the wells of living water. But that God, whose counsels are unfathomable, saw you in your low state, when you were like sheep without a shepherd. It was he who inclined the heart of our brother to come and visit you, and at length to take up his abode with you.

As we lately mourned with you when under the bereaving hand of God, so now we rejoice with you

in your present pleasing prospects. Your entire agreement in the choice of Mr. PEAK, we consider as an encouraging preface of your future tranquillity and happiness. We doubt not but you will endeavour to render his circumstances as easy as possible, so that he may give himself wholly to the duties of his office, that his profiting may appear to all. The LORD continue him to you, and make him a long and rich blessing to you and your children. God forbid that his preaching should be a favour of death to any. Take heed therefore how you hear. Remember you must give account for the improvement of your precious privileges. May such of you, as are yet strangers to the love of CHRIST, consider that you will be left without excuse if you continue impenitent. Be persuaded then to listen to the counsels of love and peace, which God is pleased to send you by the ministry of the word. And O that God would pour out his Spirit upon you, and revive his work in the midst of the years; that there may be a day of his power, when many shall flock to CHRIST as doves to their windows. Then will your dear Minister, who is now sowing in tears, reap in joy; and when a few days and years more have passed, you will meet together in heaven, and spend the vast round of eternity in praising and adoring the Lamb that was slain; who was dead, and is alive, and who liveth forever and ever.

To conclude. This dear assembly at large will permit me to remind them, that the solemn awful day is approaching, when we must individually stand before the dread tribunal of the great JEHOVAH, each to give an account of himself. In order that you may do it with joy and not with grief, be persuaded to attend to the concerns of your precious souls. "Behold, now is the accepted time! behold, now

the day of falvation!" The proclamation of mercy is yet founding in your ears, and God is still waiting to be gracious. But remember that yet a little while, and he that comes will come and will not tarry, and then will he give to every man according to his works. The LORD grant unto us, that we may find mercy in that day, and be accepted through the riches of grace in JESUS CHRIST, to dwell forever in the bosom of his love. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invifible, the only wife God, be honour and glory forever and ever,

AMEN."

THE
CHARGE,

By the Rev. JOSEPH GRAFTON, of Newton.

IT is a pleasing circumstance, that several of us, who are in the ministry, and present on this occasion, have had an acquaintance with the Pastor elect for a number of years. We do not consider him in the light of a young man, or a *stranger*, who has his ministerial character to form. From this acquaintance we form the most pleasing and hopeful anticipation of his future usefulness.

My dear Brother, by the appointment of the Council, I am to give you a Charge, as is customary on such occasions. Were I committing to your care a valuable treasure, you might naturally expect some directions, or charge respecting it. Were you to be initiated into some important office of State, you would undoubtedly feel your high responsibility. These things are mere trifles, compared with the important duties devolving upon you, and the interests connected with this day's transactions.

The declarative glory of God, and the eternal salvation of men, are objects which demand your serious attention, and should engross your supreme affection. Seeing these things are so, permit me to charge thee, therefore, before God, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom, Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season. In preaching the word, you must be attentive to what you preach. See that it accords with the Scriptures of truth. In preaching the word, you must necessarily bring into view the

divine character; the holy nature, spirituality, and perpetuity of the moral law; the moral depravity of man; the grace of God as exhibited in the gospel; the character and offices of the Redeemer; the personality and agency of the Divine Spirit; the necessity of good works in those who believe, as evidences of the genuineness of their faith; the future and eternal happiness of the saints; and the eternal misery of those who die in sin and impenitency. These are some of the cardinal and discriminating points of Christianity, which you are to preach; and preach them, my Brother, *faithfully, affectionately, and constantly*. But, Sir, you are not only to take heed to your doctrine, but to yourself also: *Be thou an example to believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity*. A minister, by a few irregularities, will soon destroy what he professes to build. Most preachers strive to be great; but, my Brother, strive to be good. In living agreeably to the precepts of truth, a minister will shine out of the pulpit as well as in. Be attentive to the discipline of the Church; let nothing be done through partiality; in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves; if peradventure God will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth. You will, my Brother, be particular in administering the special ordinances of the gospel, how you administer them, and to whom. These are few and simple, viz. Baptism and the LORD'S Supper. A credible profession of faith in JESUS CHRIST is a Bible pre-requisite to Baptism. I cannot better express myself upon the mode than in the language of Dr. Moshiem, a late ingenious and learned Pede-Baptist ecclesiastical historian. Describing the practice of the Church in the 1st and 2d centuries, he says, "the persons that were to be baptized, after they had repeated the *Creed*, confessed and renounced their sins, were immersed under water, and

received into CHRIST's kingdom, by a solemn invocation of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; according to the express command of our blessed LORD." Ever indulge a spirit of candour towards Christians of different denominations; remembering that upon no external rite depends the salvation of the soul; but never part with *truth*, or mutilate God's commands for the sake of accommodation.

Should you be called to assist in setting apart others to the great work of the ministry; see that you commit these things to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Lay hands suddenly on no man. In a word, study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. God grant that your *union* may be mutual and lasting; and when your present connexion shall be dissolved, may you meet in glory, and spend the rolling period of eternity in celebrating redeeming grace and love.

Grant it, heavenly FATHER, for CHRIST's sake;
AMEN.

THE
Right-Hand of Fellowship,

BY THE
Rev. Mr. LEWIS, of Harwich.

THE sacred Scriptures inform us, that all the Churches of CHRIST are members of one body; and are united to one another in love, and to CHRIST their Head, by a living faith in his precious name. They also inform us, that the *Right-Hand of Fellowship* was given by the apostles to others invested with the ministerial office. Upon this principle this fig-

nificant Christian ceremony has been continued down to the present day. Being, dear Sir, fully satisfied with your Christian experience and call to the great work of the gospel ministry, and also of your system of doctrine and manner of life ; in the name and behalf of this Church, and of the venerable Council convened on the present occasion, I give you the *Right-Hand*, as a token of friendship and fellowship. We cordially receive you in the arms of our Christian affection as a fellow labourer in the vineyard of our LORD. We feel willing to engage you our assistance and counsel, at all times when requested, as far as in us lies ; and shall expect the same from you in like circumstances.

May God of his infinite mercy make you, my dear Brother, a rich blessing to this people, and them to you. O that he would grant you many souls as the seals of your ministry, and crown of joy at the coming of the LORD ; that when you shall be called to drop this earthly house of your tabernacle, you may break forth in the language of the Apostle and say ; "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, and kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory, which God the righteous Judge will give at that day : And not to me only, but to all that love his appearing ; which may God grant for CHRIST's sake ;

AMEN.

